

MINUTES

Eugene Human Rights Commission
Equity and Human Rights Office – 99 West 10th Avenue
Eugene, Oregon

January 21, 2014
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Andrew Thomson, Ken Neubeck, Philip Carrasco, Chris Nunes, David Van Der Haeghen, Debra Merskin, Arun Toke, Mary Clayton commissioners; Lindsey Foltz, Michael Kinnison, staff

ABSENT: Richie Weinman, Edward Goehring, Councilor Evans

The mission of the Human Rights Commission is to promote implementation of human rights values and principles in all City of Eugene programs and throughout the wider community.

To carry out this mission the commission shall affirm, encourage, and initiate programs and services within the City of Eugene and the wider community designed to place priority upon protecting, respecting, and fulfilling the full range of universal human rights as enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To support and promote human rights, the commission will: provide human rights education, be proactive in human rights efforts, address human rights violations, ensure active public participation, be transparent and open, and be publicly accountable for human rights progress.

1. **Welcome from Chair/Agenda Review and Adjustment** – Commenced at 5:35 pm

Ken Neubeck moves to approve minutes as presented for November 19 and January 7 meeting, David Van Der Haeghen seconds, unanimous

Ken Neubeck requests to amend the agenda and insert Whoville discussion to item number 8.

Debra Merskin moves to approve agenda as amended, Ken Neubeck seconds, unanimous.

2. **Funding Requests**

HIV Alliance Health Fair

Paul Homan from HIV Alliance presented information

March 1, Atrium Building

Ken Neubeck moves to approve the \$200 for the Men's Network Health Fair Phil Carrasco seconds, unanimous. Ken Neubeck and Andrew Thomson volunteer to attend the event and facilitate use of the building.

MRG – Peace and Pie in the Park

Arun would like to consider tabling so that MRG could send a representative to speak.

Ken Neubeck moves to approve waiving fee, Chris Nunes seconds, unanimous. Ken, Chris and Andrew volunteer to participate in event.

3. Public Comment

Paul Shores – Whoville testimony, benefit to homeless, learning to live together and work together as a community, there is a lot of support from the community

Aurora Richardson – resident at Whoville, there 3 months, become close to everyone there, about 35 people currently live there. There are people living there who have been on the streets for years who are more stable since living in Whoville. There is a great value in the community that has been established there.

Catherine Siskron – with Occupy Medical, will read a press release from Occupy Medical. On January 16 EPD notified residents of Whoville that they would be evicted. Whoville residents have created a safety net for those who have no other safe places to go. They share supplies, clean water, restrooms, hand-washing. People get along well and support each other. Including the disabled. Occupy Medical offers treatment for many common ailments. Closing Whoville makes it more difficult for Occupy Medical to reach this vulnerable population. People should not be deprived of sleep, this is a form of torture. Separating the residents from bathrooms also creates a health hazard.

Art Bowerman – This is not only a human rights issue, but also a human rights emergency. A long term problem can still be an emergency. There are specific problems that are being faced this year that make it a more dire emergency for the residents of Whoville. This is unseasonably cold winter. The Mission has changed policies and is turning people away daily due to lack of space. There are people in Whoville who have no safety net.

Jen Frenser – It is a human rights emergency with Whoville being asked to close with no other location designated. It is clear the City is no longer interested in letting that piece of property be occupied and they have no plans for identifying another location. The residents have created a situation where they can survive, collaborate and meet needs. It seems like an opportunity to collaborate between the community and the government. There is a choice not to close this spot. They increased the penalty by

posting no trespassing signs which criminalizes being there. The HRC as a body could help inform others and shift the approach to a human rights approach. More people should be thinking about the homeless the way advocates are thinking about them. The HRC should step up to educate the leadership.

Mary Broadhurst – assisting with unhoused population for a while, understands the HRC has a subcommittee on homelessness. As an attorney she is wondering what the legal grounds are for closing the space. They are not citing a public health issue. The answer was that they were enforcing the No Camping Ordinance. The penalty is a citation. What is being done now is criminalization of homelessness, making it a legal trespass which is a jail-able criminal offense. Asking the HRC to write Mayor/City Council to continue Whoville. NW Expressway is not a viable site. Does not provide access, it is too steep, and no sponsor wants to take care of that site, it is a flood zone, and it is out of sight. As a committee you are being requested to act, take a stand and participate in a press conference 11 am Thursday morning. Mayor has unilateral authority to declare an emergency and stop enforcement of the no-camping ban.

4. Elections/Liaisons

CDBG – Phil would like to volunteer to be back-up
Police Commission – Ken would like to volunteer to be back-up
CRB – Deb would like to volunteer to be back-up
EHRB – David would like to volunteer to be back-up

Ken Neubeck to approve current liaisons continue and that the back-ups who volunteered Chris seconded, unanimous

Ken Neubeck moves that Chris and Andrew continue to serve, Debra seconds, unanimous (Chris and Andrew abstained)

5. Recruiting New Commissioners

Create a subcommittee

Chris, Arun, Mary are willing interested volunteering

Arun spoke with someone who is interested in applying how

Deb makes a motion to create subcommittee, Ken Neubeck seconds.

6. City Hall Rebuild

Kaarin Knudson, John Rowell, Mike Penwell

Rowell/Brokaw architects is contracted to design, the HRC is welcome to give input and feedback to help direct the design.

11 million dollars, 15 million dollar project budget. Looking for design direction by end of spring 2014, construction complete by 2015.

The questions put to the HRC:

What would you like to see in the building design that speaks to you about open government and social equity?

What would make city Hall is a welcoming place where you would want to spend time?

Mary Clayton – simple, basic, physical access, from all sides, encourage multiple elevators to ensure easy access, a place that was attractive enough that people would want to walk through even if they didn't have a meeting there, multiple flexible meeting rooms that can be opened up to utilize for differing group sizes and uses. Providing access when staff was not available so that those areas are accessible without requiring the whole building to be open. It would be nice if there was a pull-in place for drop-off access by car. The building will be heavily used, should be able to tolerate heavy use, be easily cleaned, and yet have a softness to it.

Arun Toke – visited many international places, there are many City Halls that are very public spaces, I would love to see plazas places for people to gather, incorporating green and renewable resources, accessibility (including pedestrian and bicycle access more than car access). Too many buildings with concrete and glass, would prefer energy efficient, Northwest architecture, it would be nice to separate pedestrian from car traffic.

Ken Neubeck – a lot of meeting spaces where different community groups can do their work, when the Human Rights Commission had a space on Willamette many groups used that space. I think that would make people feel like they owned a piece of City Hall if there were spaces for them to gather. I agree with the notion of the fortress, it must appear both welcoming and opening, whether that is done through use of glass or high arch-ways where people feel free to walk through, a garden area so that people feel they are not removed from nature just because they came to City Hall. 24/7 public bathroom access. Is there still discussion about a year-round enclosed farmer's market?

David Vaderhaeghen – I'd like to see it as a dynamic space that is still functional, where all people feel welcome regardless of socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, etc. Curb appeal is important from the look and feel of the building, like my first impression of River Bend, I want to feel confident that if I go there I will get what I need.

Phil Carrasco – I imagine softening the curbs around the whole building, more plantings which cause psychological friction and slowing down of traffic to help with appreciation of the look and feel of the building. Sustainable Cities Initiative recommended putting duck markers on bike lanes that would take them to campus, consider similar markers for getting to City Hall. Consider historical markers and monuments to cue people to history and directionality of City Hall. Significant bicycle parking access. Language access, 21st century language, gender neutral for example. Consider language of description like calling Eugene Skinner the first immigrant who made Eugene a home.

www.Eugenecityhall.com

7. HRC Past/Present Meet and Greet

Is there interest to do it again?

Chris is happy to coordinate with Carmen if there is interest.

Mary Clayton moves to have another reunion, Chris seconds, unanimous, Chris will coordinate with Carmen.

8. Whoville Recommendation

Ken Neubeck: Mayor Piercy is being asked to use her emergency powers to create more spaces, she is one solution, City Council can use other solutions. I think there is no reason why to not apply pressure.

The HRC was asked to do several things during public comment. My proposals were in close alignment with the requests.

There are three main tennets:

- Mayor use her emergency powers
- Alternative rest-stops be identified, no closure until other locations identified for people to relocate
- Health and safety of residents of the camps protected

Ken Neubeck, moves to appoint Ken Neubeck, Chris Nunes, and Andrew Thomson to draft the final statement from an HRC perspective to Mayor and City Council to support the continuing occupancy of Whoville during the winter, based on the above bullet points within 24 hours. Phil Carrasco seconds, unanimous.

9. Budget Process

Should the HRC comment and how?

Written statement and testimony during final meeting

Mary Clayton moves that Andrew draft a message to the Budget Committee to be read at the public hearing on January 28 and also submitted in writing Deb Merskin seconds, unanimous.

Andrew will make it to read the statement, Chris will be available, Ken will come

10. Commissioner Reports

MLK Event Participation – march and evening events

Arun Toke voiced support for a more accessible downtown location

Chris Nunes voiced support for more visibility, such as banners, stage-time, increase community awareness

Ken Neubeck mentioned that the HRC has floated the idea in the past to host meetings out in community amongst marginalized populations

Phil Carrasco voiced support for improving marketing and community outreach, I'd like to offer broader participation for HRC at the forums that I help to organize, and concur with the idea of increasing visibility, including signage and more community outreach

IHRD – the event was all planned, the weather prevented the event

CRB – no meeting in January, next meeting in February

Driver's Licenses – Phil Carrasco, wants to use a human rights lens to address the driver's card issue, not to minimize the economic or public safety issues, we'd be adding more arguments, as a starting point for future legislation as well. Federal immigration reform is causing trickle down issues at the local level. Spoke to Bob Bussel from the Integration Network (IN), wanting to approach the HRC to endorse it and help in editing the document.

Andrew, Ken are willing to volunteer to edit.

Phil Carrasco moves to create a subcommittee consisting of Andrew, Ken and Phil to work along with IN and GLAD to draft a letter in support Oregon Driver's licenses for undocumented workers, Chris Nunes seconds, unanimous

11. Staff Report

Budget

Lt. Bills, police liaison